



OHR Employee Benefits

April 2001

TSP Changes in 2001

Participation in the Thrift Savings Plan

Public Law 106-361, enacted October 27, 2000, allows employees to begin contributing to the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) immediately upon appointment to a position covered by FERS or CSRS. However, it **does not** eliminate the waiting period for Agency matching contributions. Consequently, FERS employees can begin making contributions to TSP before they'll be eligible to receive Agency automatic one-percent or Agency matching contributions.

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board will implement this statutory change with the May 15 through July 31, 2001, Open Season. Essentially, all FERS and CSRS employees appointed before July 1 will have the opportunity to make a TSP contribution election during this Open Season.

Transfers to be Permitted

Legislation has been passed that will allow employees to transfer money into the TSP from 401(k) plans and similar tax-deferred retirement savings accounts. These accounts are limited to pension, profit-sharing, and stock bonus plans, and include 401(k) plans. Rollovers from regular IRA's are not permitted. A date for implementation of requests for rollover into the TSP is yet to be determined.

New TSP Investment Funds

Beginning with the May – July 2001 Open Season, all TSP participants will be able to invest in two new funds: 1) the Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund, and 2) the International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

Once the S and I Funds become available, you will be able to change the way your payroll contributions are invested in all five TSP funds at any time, instead of only during TSP open season. (However, interfund transfers, which change the way the existing balance in your account is invested, will still occur monthly because accounts will remain monthly valued.) You will be able to allocate your payroll contributions and make interfund transfers using the TSP Web Site or the Thriftline—or by mailing to the TSP Service Office the new Investment Allocation Form (TSP-50) which will be available in May.

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NASA Employee Benefits System

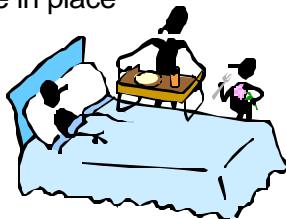
The NASA Employee Benefits System (NEBS) is scheduled for roll out in September 2001 at GRC. It was developed at JSC for distribution to all NASA Centers. The NASA Benefits "System" consists of four parts. The Benefits and Pay Web Site, an on-line benefits handbook, a listing of all Agency benefits specialist, and an on-line benefits statement. More information will be provided in the next issue of the Benefits Bulletin.

Long Term Care Insurance for the Federal Family

Public Law 106-265, the Long Term Care Security Act, passed both the House and the Senate unanimously with broad bipartisan support and was signed into law on September 19, 2000. The Office of Personnel Management is now working to make a long-term care insurance program available. Long Term Care will provide coverage for such long-term needs as nursing home care, home health care, assisted living facilities, adult day care, and personal care or homemaker services.

Those eligible for coverage include active employees and retirees of the Federal Government, Postal Service, and the Uniformed Services. Family members include spouses and children 18 years and older, parents, step-parents, and parents in law of the employee. OPM may add additional family members by regulation.

The long-term care insurance program is not available yet, but it will be in place by October 2002. You can check the OPM Web page below Every month to track the progress.



<http://www.opm.gov/insure/ltc/index.htm>

PIN Numbers – PIN Numbers PIN Numbers

PIN numbers are essential to accomplish tasks that previously required a "paper form" and manual processing.

We urge you to have current PIN numbers for the following:

Employee Express

Employee Express can be accessed by computer or phone. The PIN number is used to make the following changes:

- ☒ Federal Employee Health Benefits Changes
- ☒ Thrift Savings Plan Open Season Changes
- ☒ Federal/State Tax Withholding
- ☒ Direct Deposit of Net Paycheck or Change in Allotments
- ☒ Home Address Changes
- ☒ Savings Bonds
- ☒ Personal Identification Number (PIN) Changes.

Call the OPM Help Desk, (912) 757-3030, to get your PIN number in time for TSP Open Season, which begins May 15, 2001.

Employee Express access on the Internet:

<http://www.employeeexpress.gov>

By phone: (912) 757-3169 or (800) 571-3453

TDD: (888) 880-0412

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)

Your TSP PIN number can be used year-round for the following purposes:

- ☒ Review your monthly account balance
- ☒ Review loan amount available and current interest rate
- ☒ Review current status of your loan application
- ☒ Request, change, or cancel an interfund transfer
- ☒ Request or customize your four-digit PIN number

Use the TSP Web Site to request a new PIN number. Click on Account Access and after you input your Social Security Number you will be allowed to request a new PIN number. It will be mailed to your address of record for TSP.

TSP ThriftLine – (504) 255-8777



ASSIGNMENT AND LIVING BENEFIT

Under FEGLI if you wish, you may irrevocably (one time only) assign your life insurance to another person or persons, a corporation, or an irrevocable trust. Also, you may elect to receive a lump-sum payment (living benefits) if you are terminally ill and have a documented medical prognosis that your life expectancy is 9 months or less.

Under NEBA you or your legal representative, while you are alive and insured under the Basic Plan, may request that a portion of the amount of your Basic Life Insurance be paid to you prior to your death. The amount of insurance that NEBA pays as an Accelerated Life Insurance Benefit is up to 50 percent of your Group Life Insurance amount, but no more than \$50,000 and no less than \$5,000. The amount of your life insurance that is paid at your death will be reduced by any amount paid as an accelerated benefit.

To qualify for this benefit you must be under 70 years old, be terminally ill and expected to die within 12 months, or confined to a nursing home from which you are not expected to leave and expected to die within 18 months. These conditions must be certified by a doctor.

Vacation Plans?

The NASA Employees Benefit Association (NEBA) offers low cost travel insurance that you pay through biweekly payroll deduction. NEBA Travel Insurance protects you when you travel, depending on which plan you choose. It may be to and from work, on shopping trips, running cross-town errands, vacationing or taking business trips (local or worldwide) or for any covered accidental death. Your election of coverage determines the cost. Refer to the chart below for plans, coverage, and rates.

		Insurance Class		Bi-Weekly Premium Per Employee	
Plan I covers personal and local business travel by car, NASA vehicles or by land, sea or air common carriers.	Plan I	Without Spouse	\$25,000		\$0.17
			50,000		0.35
			100,000		0.69
		With Spouse (benefit \$10,000)	\$25,000		\$0.27
			50,000		0.44
			100,000		0.79
Extended Coverage Plan II covers everything in Plan I plus worldwide business travel plus 24 hour coverage for any covered accidental death.	Plan II	Without Spouse	\$25,000		\$0.35
			50,000		0.69
			100,000		1.38
		With Spouse (benefit \$10,000)	\$25,000		\$0.44
			50,000		0.79
			100,000		1.48

To enroll in NEBA travel insurance, you may contact the Benefits Office at extension 3-2027. Please visit the NEBA website at <http://neba.nasa.gov/> for more information. You will be asked to complete a simple enrollment form and an authorization for payroll deduction.

You are not required to carry NEBA Basic Life Insurance to enroll in NEBA Travel Accident coverage.



Military Leave Changes

There have recently been some changes made to military leave provisions.

5 USC 6323(a) provides 15 calendar days per fiscal year for active duty, active duty training, and inactive duty training. An employee can carry over 15 days into the next fiscal year.

Military leave should be credited to a full-time employee on the basis of an 8-hour workday. The minimum charge to leave is 1 hour. An employee may be charged military leave only for hours that the employee would otherwise have worked and received pay.

Employees who request military leave for inactive duty training (which is generally 2, 4, or 6 hours in length) will be charged only the amount of military leave necessary to cover the period of training and necessary travel. Members of the Reserves and/or National Guard will no longer be charged military leave for weekends and holidays that occur within the period of military service.

Questions regarding the use of military leave should be directed to Carol Mehallick, extension 3-2507, or Lori Pietravoia, extension 3-2506.

Thinking of Telecommuting?

Telecommuting offers the employee an alternative work location, which often allows tasks to be performed in a quieter, less stressful environment.

There are three categories of Telecommuting at Glenn:

1. Ongoing (no specific end date)
2. Temporary (specific start and end date)
3. As-Needed (generally in 1-day increments on an as-needed basis)

Categories 1 and 2 require submission of Forms NASA C-88 and C-89. In addition to supervisory approval, authorization by the Chief, Office of Human Resources is required.

Category 3 requires submission of NASA C-88 and approval by immediate supervisor. Approval by the Chief, Office of Human Resources is not necessary.

All Telecommuting application should be sent to the Office of Human Resources, Carol Mehallick, M.S. 15-1.

Please refer to the following Web site to review the Telecommuting User's Guide and for information on Safety and Security Considerations and details on Remote Access.

www.grc.nasa.gov/WWW/OHR/TC

Questions regarding Telecommuting should be directed to Carol Mehallick at extension 3-2507.

Upcoming Retirement Seminars

Retirement Planning Seminar – April 25, 26, & 27, 2001 (8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) – Targeted for all employees who plan to retire from Federal service. The time to attend this seminar is now, regardless of how far away from retirement you are. This seminar is being offered exclusively for NASA Glenn employees.

Retirement Planning Seminar – Sept. 18, 19, & 20, 2001 (8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) – Topics covered will be the same as the April seminar. In addition to GRC employees, approximately 100 seats will be offered to Federal employees in the greater Cleveland area in cooperation with the Cleveland Federal Executive Board.

You and I and Your Federal Retirement – Sept. 19, 2001 (6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.) – An evening seminar for spouses of civil service employees to learn about the Federal retirement program and the impact it will have on their retirement years together.

Mid-Career Planning - April 23 & 24, 2001 (8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.) – For GRC Federal employees with more than 5 years of service and who are at least 5 to 10 years away from retirement.

Retirement Refresher – Sept. 21, 2001 (8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) – For employees who have taken a retirement seminar and would like to have information updates.

